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Obituary

Professor Emeritus

Dr. INAGAKI, Hiroshi (1924–2007)



Dr. Hiroshi Inagaki, Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University, passed away on January 20, 2007, in Kyoto.

Dr. Inagaki was born in Nagoya on December 3, 1924. He graduated from the Department of Fiber Chemistry at the Faculty of Engineering, Kyoto University, in 1946. After 6 years of research and teaching service at the same Faculty as Full-Time Lecturer, he was promoted to Associate Professor in 1954 to join Institute for Chemical Research (ICR), Kyoto University. In 1960, he was appointed Full Professor at ICR, a position that he held until retirement, to take charge of a new laboratory, the Laboratory of Polymer Properties. In accordance with the development of his research work, his laboratory was later renamed the Laboratory of Polymer Separation and Characterization. He retired from Kyoto University in 1988 and subsequently was honored with the title of Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University.

He conducted extensive research in physicochemical fields of polymer science. Specifically, his research fields included the separation and characterization of macromolecules by various means such as ultra-centrifugation, light scattering, and thin-layer and gel permeation chromatography, the structural and functionalizing studies of naturally occurring polymers such as wool and cellulose, and the properties and formation mechanisms of block, graft, and statistical copolymers. His pioneering achievements in each field are highly appreciated internationally as well as domestically. Perhaps the achievement the most widely appreciated and the most beloved by himself is related to thin-layer chromatography. He introduced this simple and non-costly technique to the polymer field, showing its versatility to characterize polymers and copolymers: for example, he showed that it enabled separation of copolymers according to composition only without the interference of chain length effect. Similar information was and is, even today, hardly obtainable by other techniques.

He gave lectures on physical chemistry of macromolecules at the Graduate School of Engineering, Kyoto University as well as at many other foreign and domestic institutions, and supervised the dissertation studies of a number of graduate students. After his retirement from Kyoto University, he continued his educational work at Mukogawa Women's University from 1989 to 1996 as professor/dean at the Graduate School.

Dr. Inagaki has also made no small contributions to the management and administration of ICR, Kyoto University, and other scientific and international communities. For example, he was director of ICR and member of the University Council, Kyoto University, for two years from April, 1984. He was president of the Society of Fiber Science and Technology, Japan (SFST), and served as chair of the Polymer Characterization Committee of the Society of Polymer Science, Japan (SPSJ) as well as several international conferences. He was much concerned about problems related to academic interaction and exchange of students and scientists with foreign countries, serving as member and chair of the International Committee, Kyoto University. Most notably, he was one of the two cofounders of "Haus der Begegnung Kyoto" (Kyoto International Student House) and had been chair of the board of trustees of the House until his death.

His sincere and warm personality was respected by many friends, colleagues, students, and all those who came in contact with him. For his distinguished scientific, educational, international, and other achievements, he was honored with the SFST Award for Outstanding Achievement and the SPSJ Award for Outstanding Achievement in Polymer Science. In 2002, the Government made public recognition of his achievements by the Second Class of the Order of the Sacred Treasure, "Kun-Ni-Tou Zuihoushou" Medal.